

A
S E R M O N
Preached before Her
M A J E S T Y
T H E
Queen D O W A G E R,

The 13th. Sunday after Pentecost, 1686.

*Et factum est dum iret Jesus Jerusalem, occurrerunt
ei decem viri Leprosi.*

Lucæ c. XVII.

*And it came to pass as Jesus went into Jerusalem,
there met him ten Men that were Lepers.*

By F. Edward Scarisbrike, of the Society of Jesus.

Published by Her Majesties Command.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Matthew Turner, at the Lamb in
High-Holborn, MDCLXXXVI.

A

MEMORIAL

Preached before Her

MAJESTY

THE

Queen Dowager.

The 13th Sunday after Trinity, 1888.

By the Rev. Canon
of the Diocese of London.



LONDON.

Printed by the Society of St. John the Evangelist,
at the 'Lion and Lamb' Press, 1, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

By F. Edward, Secretary of the Society of St. John.

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SERMON

Preached before Her

MAJESTY

THE

QUEEN DOWAGER,

The 13th. Sunday after Pentecost, 1686.

Luke c. XVII.

And it came to pass as Jesus went into Jerusalem, there met him ten Men that were Lepers.

THe whole Life of Christ upon Earth, as it was in it self Divine, so it was to Men most *Mysterious*. The words he spoke contained Truths for our Instruction, and the Actions he performed, were so many convincing Arguments of his tender Love and Affection towards us. There met him, as we read to day in the Gospel, *ten Lepers*, Objects of no less Horror then Compassion,

Luce c. 17.

whose exterior Mien and Aspect was so hideous and deformed, whose Diseases so contagious, that by the very Law they were banished from Camp and City, and sequestred from the common Society of Men: yet *Christ*, ever Rich in his Mercy, superabounding in his goodness, and who so often made profession, he came into the World to heal the Sick and infirm, not the strong and sound; nothing at all deterred with so loathsome and frightful a Spectacle, with a loving Countenance advanceth towards them, and though they, as being conscious of their sad condition, out of a profound Reverence, and respect, stood at a distance, *Steterunt a longe*: yet their ardent and reiterated Prayer, *Jesu, Master, have Mercy on us*, reached without delay the Throne of Grace; their Petition was graciously admitted, a certain and speedy Cure was promised with this only conditional Reserve, that they should return back and shew themselves unto the Priests: with which order whilst they willingly comply, his Goodness and Charity, in the very way, prevents their hasty steps and desires; for as they went, says the Holy Text, they found themselves cleansed and cured. *Et factum*

Etum est dum irent, mundati sunt, Luke 17. vers. 14.

That which literally and truly *Christ* performed in curing a corporal Leprosy, was only a *Type* and *Figure* of what daily hapneth in the cure of a *Leprosy* of another nature, by so much the greater and more dangerous, by how much the part it affects, is more noble and spiritual. Who doth not conceive how that noxious and pestilent Distemper passed from the *Jew* to the *Christian*? How many to be found of all ranks and conditions, not ten, but thousands, whose Souls are rendred more distorted, ugly and deformed by the foul *Leprosy* of Sin, than ever *Leper* was in the horrid Shape and Figure of his Body? God grant I may have no reason to address myself to several present here in those words, the Prophet *Jeremy* used to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*; *Egressus est a filia Sion omnis decor ejus*: From the Daughter of *Sion* all her beauty is departed. From the Children of the Church, from the Temples of the Holy Ghost, from the Spouses of *Christ* is fled that Beauty and Splendor, so much admired and cherished by *Angels*. *Dicite filii Sion inclyti & amicti auxo* Jerem. Lam. c. 1. v. 6. *puro*; Tell me you illustrious Sons of *Sion*,
on ,

Thre. 4. a. 2.

on, you Candidates of Immortality, you who
 one day without Spot or Blemish hope to
 mount in Triumph into the Heavenly Je-
 rusalem, how comes that Nuptial Garment,
 that Spotless Stole of Innocency received from
 the Font of Baptism, so grossly to be
 Jer. Thre.4. sullied, and so impiously to be defiled? *Quo-
 modo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color op-
 timus?* how comes that pure Gold of Chari-
 ty, that sweet and best colour of Vertue to be
 so strangely changed? The time was when
 with the Spouse in the Canticles, you were
 Thre.4. whiter than the driven Snow, more ruddy
 than the Ruby, more polished then the Saphir;
 the time was when you had not a word which
 was not innocent, a thought that was not
 Chast, an action that was not Angelical. But
 these Ornaments are gone, these Flowers
 Thre.4. blasted and decayed. *Denigrata est super Carbo-
 nes facies eorum.* And on the contrary, your
 Face is become blacker then a Coal, and
 your selves more abominable then the things
 you have loved. *Abalienati sunt in Confusio-
 nem, & facti sunt abominabiles, sicut ea quæ di-
 lexerunt.* There needs no Apology for so an
 unexpected a change. It is this general
 and Epidemical Disease of Sin and Wicked-
 ness, which as a Leprosy hath overrun the
 great

great Body of Christianity, destroyed the luster, and defaced the Beautiful Features of our Soul, with the Vice and Scurf of a corrupted life.

Give me leave then to vent my just Anger and Passion to day against an evil though invisible, yet commonly fatal, by shewing you in my first Part, what a strange change a Spiritual Leprosy worketh in a Soul, how infectious it is in it self, and how contagious to others; In my Second, I left this evil should reach the Heart and Vitals, my intent shall be to propose so efficacious a Remedy, that as the ten Lepers did, so I hope every one present, as they depart from this sacred Place may by the virtue and Mercy of Christ, find themselves thoroughly cleansed and ruled. But how shall this Pure Heart be Created? Who shall renew this right Spirit within us? It is you, O Holy Creator, whose assistance and help the Church so often implores, *Veni Creator Spiritus*; Come then O Holy Spirit, *lava quod est sordidum*, wash what is foul; *riga quod est aridum*, Water, what is dry; *sana quod est falcum*, heal what is wounded. These Favours we no way better can obtain, than by the intercession of the ever Pure and Immaculate Virgin, by saying, Ave, Maria.

The

The first Part.

IT is a common Axiom in Philosophy, that nothing appears in clearer colours, than when it is set off by its contrary, and that the light never receives greater luster than by the opposite Shade. *Contraria juxta se posita magis elucescunt.* To the end then we may have a true and right prospective of the horrid form of a Soul, disfigured by Sin, I will place the same before you in a more pleasant Prospect of its native Worth and Dignity. Man according to his own Nature, is of a noble Race, stamped at his Creation, according to the likeness of his Maker, and though moulded of Clay and Earth; yet by the Divine Breath received an *Immortal Substance*, a *Spiritual being*, a *life-giving Soul*; which being the best part, and not much inferior to the *Angels*, raised him above the grosser Region of sense and matter, and invested him with the *Sovereignty* of this lower World. *Grace* yet still improved his Fortune: for his nature by a strange Union of Love, being espoused to the *Divinity*, he ascends to a higher Rank: He is adopted the Son of God, designed *Heir* of the
the

the Kingdom of Heaven; and by consequence, being of so noble a condition and Race, ought never to degenerate from the worth of his Extraction. Acknowledge then O *Christian Soul* your Dignity, consider who is your *Head*, of what *Mystical Body* you are a Member: call to mind that from all *Eternity* you were predestinated to be a *Holy*, *Pure*, and an *elected People*, a *Royal Priesthood* without Spot or Blemish; to whom *Christ*, that he might distinguish you from all other baser and viler Sects, hath given a new being in the *Font of Baptism*, hath washed you with his sacred Blood, inspired into you not a breath of Life, as in your Creation, but his ever *Holy* and *Vivifying Spirit*. O that it were in my power to describe unto you, as it were in passing, the beauty of an innocent and just Soul, embellished with the Ornaments of *Sanctifying Grace*. All things in Heaven and Earth fall short thereof; the sacred Scripture seems to labour in finding out rich Comparisons, noble Titles whereby to give a right Idæa of so amiable an Object; such a Soul is called in one place, the *Temple of the Living God*, in another, the *Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost*, in a third place, the *Seat of Wisdom*,

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else-

Psal. 82.

elsewhere the *Throne of the Sacred Trinity*. Now again she is compared to a *Spouse*, set forth on the day of her Nuptials, with all the State and Pomp imaginable ; then to a *Queen* adorned with the Royal Robes of Gold, with a *Scepter* of Immortality in her Hand, and a *Crown* of glory on her Head ; till at length by Participation of the *Divine Attributes*, she is even stiled a little God. *Ego dixi Dij estis vos & filii excelsi omnes*. But her chief glory is from within ; according to that, *Omnis decor filie Regis ab intus* ; invisible, it is true, to the Eyes of Mortals, but yet nothing is so taking and charming to those of immortal and pure Spirits. The understanding like a *Sun*, is always shining with the bright rays of Supernatural Truths, the Memory looking back with Gratitude upon past favours and benefits ; the Will as a *Phoenix*, consuming in chaste and holy desires. As in *Heaven*, so nothing here finds admittance, but what is pure and clean. Irregular motions and Appetites, are either quiet or silent ; or if they tend to Mutinies or Rebellion, they are presently checked, and forced to remain in a due Subordination to Reason, and to follow the train of Princely Vertues. In a word, nothing comes so home

home to a true and full description of her, as what Ezekiel gives us, under the Person of the King of Tyrus, c. 28. *Tu signaculum similitudinis plenus sapientia & decore, in delitiis Paradisi fuisti, omnis lapis pretiosus operimentum tuum.* You, my dear Christian Brother, though never so slighted by Men, though never so poor, and of a low Extraction, as long as your Soul bears the Character of Gods holy Grace, you are a lively Copy of that great and uncreated Original, you are perfect in Beauty, and absolute in Wisdom; you walk in the ways and delights of Paradise: every vertue as a pretious Stone is your Ornament, and therefore no wonder that the Consistory of the sacred Trinity, hath made a solemn promise, *ad eum veniemus, & mansionem apud eum faciemus.* We will Joan. 23. come to such a Heart, to dwell there by Grace, command by our Law, and reign by our Glory. Happy, and thrice happy state, if it were but constant and permanent.

But behold a suddain change, a surprising Metamorphosis, when this charming Beauty, and splendor of the Soul, begins to degenerate into a Spiritual Leprosy: It is no Romantick Fable, but a Catholick and an eternal Truth, that of all Evils, Sin is the

greatest; though I know nothing that is more easily committed, and nothing less taken into consideration: and herein consists our Weakness and Misery, that we can never be brought to conceive a sufficient horror of it. We grow weary and impatient with so many Repetitions, and so much inculcating from the *Pulpit*, and in *Schools*, that *Sin* is the only Evil to be avoided and feared; and whilst this daily lesson is rung in our Ears, we are apt in the mean time to flatter our selves, that the *Monster* is not so foul as he is painted. From words then, let us proceed to proofs.

What more Beautiful then the *Soul* of a just Man, of which I have spoken? God inviteth every one to contemplate the Harmonious Symmetry and proportion of it. *Ecce pulcra es amica mea, & macula non est in te, ecce tu pulcra es.* And yet what more deformed, what more disfigured then the same, when once it is infected with the Malignant Leprosy of Vice and Wickedness? A dark night of ignorance overshadows the understanding, the active powers become languishing, and unprofitable; the *Will* is debauched, and makes her self an Idolatress to every
Creature.

Creature. That once so beautiful *Fabrick* becomes a perfect resemblance of the *first* confused *Chaos* of the World, for as much as being void of the light of Vertue, there remains a meer *Abyss* of disorder: all its Dictamens and Actions relish of nothing but Earth, Sence, Carnality and Pleasure; the irregular *Passions* of the *Appetite* are without command, Words without Bridle or Restraint, Life without Rule or Reason. What a Horror and Confusion must it be to a Christian to consider that he who not long before was the *Temple* of Sanctity, the *Darling* of *Divine Providence*, is now become the *Slave* of the *Devil*, a *Vessel* of Infamy, a *Retreat* for Impure *Spirits*, an Object of God's hatred and detestation. The effects which follow this change can never be thought on without a flood of Tears. The *Capital* of Grace that was lent us, in consideration of which God justly expected from us a reasonable Interest of Good Works; the *Peace* of Conscience, both the Moral and Spiritual Life, which consisted in the possession of Vertue and Sanctity, are destroyed; nay the very natural *essence* of Man, which is chiefly placed in the Character of Reason, is in some measure defaced, and nothing to be discerned, which in all respects is not impiously

ously prophaned. Those illustrious Titles of the *Adopted Sons of God*, and *Heirs of Paradise*, those noble Pretensions to the *Kingdom of Heaven* are utterly abolish'd and cancell'd. The *Heavens* see this change, and not without horror; the *Saints* and they are astonished, the *Angels* and they weep, *Angeli pacis amore flebant*, whilst the deceived *Sinner ridet & moritur*, laughs and dies.

Isa. c. 33.

O unadvised, foolish, and mistaken *World*, how unjust is thy Proceedings! after so many Asseverations concerning the ugliness and malice of *Sin* drawn from the irrefragable Testimony of *Holy Writ*, I do not know how it comes to pass that whatsoever is spoken in this kind, seems to be cast to the Wind; and because we find but few who refrain themselves from offending *God* grievously, we are apt to imagine, that he who with Zeal and Vigour pleads against the Vices of the *Age*, and endeavours to lay open their Deformity, is either imposed upon himself, or would impose upon others. But my comfort is, that I speak to those who are moved by Reason and Truth, not by Railery and Conceits; he who on the contrary imagines this subject to be only a common *Topick* of the

the Preacher, an essay of Wit and Discourse, is fitter for the Mosks of *Arabia*, or the Temples of the *Gentiles*; and for those that firmly believe *Sin* to be a greater evil then I can explicate, or you understand, and yet (not so much out of Frailty of Nature, or Vehemency of *Temptation*, but out of a barbarous *Levity*, a bilar kind of *Genius*, meerly for *Ostentation* sake for a Nothing) do not only commit, but persevere in the same, what Conceit to frame of them, I know not. You who all day feed upon *Iniquity*, and drink it in as *water*, to you I speak, who not staying till you be tempted by the Devil, do by an anticipated and improved *Malice* prevent his *Suggestions*, make *Detractions* pass for *Pastimes*, *Revenge* for *Generosity*, and all sorts of *Impiety* for *Gallantry*, answer me to the Question proposed long since by *S. Chrysoft.* in his 18. Hom. *Quomodo te humana anima præditum esse intelligam?* How shall I know that you are endowed with a rational Soul? The Nature of every thing is to be gathered from its *Method* and *Manner* of acting, not from its exteriour *Form* or *Figure*. What Life is that you lead from Morning till Night? You eat, drink, walk and follow whatsoever your sensual Appetite leads you to.

Pfal. 48.

to. And doth not your Horse or your Dog do as much as this amounts to? *Homo cum in honore esset non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, & similis factus est illis*: Man being in honour did not understand himself; he is compared to senseless Brutes, and become like unto them. What time do you allot to the lifting up your Mind to God? When do you think of what is past in order to Repent, of what is present to amend, or to dispose more cautiously of the future? You grant that every grievous Offence robs you of Grace, and of an eternal weight of Glory subsequent to it; that it threatens you with a Temporal Punishment in this Life, and an everlasting one in the Next: and yet what difference do you make betwixt a Crime of so fatal Consequence, and an Action that is altogether indifferent? Do you not sport your selves alike with both, and remain as unconcerned after the one as the other? Dear Christian Brother, if your Condition were such, that after every Sin you committed, you were to lose an Arm, a Leg or an Eye, you would think of it twice before you would engage your self in so rash an Attempt; and yet Faith teacheth us that by such an Offence you lose incomparably more,

more, to wit, *God* and your own *Soul*, and in the mean time you are nothing moved thereat. Was there ever *madness* like to this, to believe as we do, and act and live so contrary to what we believe? The true reason of this irrational proceeding is, That the one is a sensible loss, and by consequence we presently feel the effect of it; the other relates to things wholly *spiritual*, which commonly in this *Life* we little value or comprehend. Consonant to which are the words of *S. Paul*, 1 *Corinth. c. 2. v. 14. Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritus Dei*: A Man that is plunged in Delights, that is drowned in his Pleasures, that is charmed with the dazzling and false lustre of present Objects, doth not easily comprehend those things which belong to the *Spirit of God*. But when the Eyes of our Body are closed, and those of our Soul are opened, we shall then understand that the Divine Oracles delivered by him, who is Truth it self, concerning *Sin*, used no *hyperbole* or *exaggeration*; no sooner shall we be subtracted from the Jurisdiction of *Time*, and entred into the Region of *Eternity*, but the first thing we shall stand amazed at will be this; How it was possible that we should

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follow and adore, as so many Deities, those hideous Idols and Monsters of Sin and Wickedness. In a moment will occur unto our memory those words suggested by *Eusebius Gallicanus*: *Ubi estis concupiscentiæ? ubi estis illecebræ? ergone ad horam momentaneas & fugitivas iniecitis delectationes ut æternas postea inferretis angustias?* Where are you now O wicked Desires? Whither are you gone you fond Delights and vain Allurements? have you fed my deluded Appetite for an hour with fading and imaginary Pleasures, that afterwards you might afflict me with an Eternity of Torments? This Consideration it was that made so deep an impression on the hearts of the Saints, and caused that wish in *S. Anselm*, who often professed he would rather descend into the Flames of Hell in the state of Innocency, then purchase the greatest and most lasting Pleasures at the dear rate of committing a mortal Sin. This it was that made *Blanch*, Queen of France, so often reiterate her Prayer, That her Son *Lewis* might rather fall dead at her Feet, than ever be so unhappy as to offend God grievously: which pious Expression of hers wrought so powerfully upon the Soul of this young Prince, that he ever after was
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In vitâ S. Ludo.

more renowned for the splendor of his Vertues, than for that of the Throne he sat on. This Motto it was which has layn so deeply engraven'd in the Minds of all those who ever made profession of Sanctity, *Tantum a facie colubri fuge peccatum; Fly from Sin as* Eccles. 21. *from the face of a Serpent.*

They understood right this important Truth, That the Malice of Sin is not only infectious in it self, but likewise contagious to others. This Spiritual Leprosy is not content only to feed upon the Veins it possesseth, but seeks a larger Sphere wherein to spread its Venome. If the Disease it self be dangerous, the approach unto it is no less. In the Fifth of Numbers, we read how that Moses received expresse Orders from God, that every Leper was to be cast out of the Camp, lest they should infect others. *Præcipe filiis Israel, &c.* There was nothing more strictly observed than this in the Old Law, because by long Experience they found that not only the Touch and the Company, but the very Sight thereof was ominous, disastrous, and catching; and therefore as we read to day in the Gospel, *Steterunt a longi*, the ten Le-

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pers stood at a distance. O that we used but half that industry and labour in the *New Law*, in preserving our *Souls* from the infectious Company of the Wicked, seeing that the *Mind* is more prone to suck in Poyson then the *Body*.

Parents and Masters of Families, it is *here* that in a more particular manner I address my self unto you, and conjure you by whatsoever is sacred and venerable amongst Christians, That you spare no pains or industry in watching over those whom *God* hath committed to your Charge, and that you imploy your Authority efficaciously in keeping them from the Conversation of those, who by their bad Example and loose Life, may work upon their tender years, seeing, as the Apostle saith, You are one day to render a severe account for their *Souls*. As the Devil has no way more sure and infallible to pervert Mens understanding, than to procure that bad *Principles* and *erroneous Dictamens* be instilled into them whilst they are young and capable of receiving any Impression; so he hath no surer way to empoison the *will*, then to engage it betimes in the Snares of evil
Com-

Company, and so set before it the bad Example of others, before it knows the difference betwixt *Good* and *Evil*. Example is the *Pole* towards which, like the Needle in the *Compass*, their Hearts and Affections turn themselves continually; it is the *Rule* to which they *square* their Life and Actions: They willingly tread in the Paths of those who go before them, and their Nature being sociable and flexible, they willingly affect to say and do with the *Company*; the Stream and Crowd of many carries them away with violence; and the Example of others passing with them for a *Law*, holds an absolute Sovereignty over their Hearts. But above all, the Example of Great men maketh the deepest Impression: they seem to be placed in the *Firmament* of *Honour* like so many Stars, to influence the Popular World, and produce therein either good or bad effects, according to their different Aspects. Place what you will upon the *Altar* of *Honour*, let it be Gold or Wood, a Man or a Beast, Vice or Vertue, it will be both adored and imitated. Of how great consequence then must it be to remove the tender years of *Innocency* from that *Company*, from that Example

ample which infects more than a *Leprosy*, and poysoneth more than the most venomous *Serpent*. That which chiefly preserves the flower of Youth in the height of *Grace* and interior Beauty, is a certain pious Fear, a vertuous Bashfulness, which, as great *Tertullian* affirms, standeth like a Life-guard or faithful Centinel, to keep off whatsoever carries the least resemblance of evil: *Omne malum natura timore & pudore perfudit*: And yet these lovely Flowers, how soon come they to be blasted by the contagious Breath of a dissolute Libertine?

Gen. 39. n. 9.

How many innocent and spotless Youths have protested with the Patriarch *Joseph*, *Quomodo possum hoc malum facere?* How is it possible that I, who have been brought up in the fear of God, so well instructed by my Parents and Teachers, should ever commit this evil? I will rather lose the sweetness of this Life, than the purity of my Soul; till at length, being unfortunately engaged and entangled in the Company of others, that natural blush begins by little and little to vanish, the Alarm of Conscience to be quiet and silent, the Fear of God retires, and Sin appears

pears no more such a Bugbear as before, and so at length he fallerh into all Irregularities, and is ashamed (as S. Augustine relateth of himself before his Conversion) not to be altogether shameless: *Pudet non esse impudentem.* But I will touch no more upon a Subject which daily Experience teacheth us to be true, and which so many lament, but know not how to put a stop to it, or what Remedy to apply.

I return again to those who find themselves unhappily infested with this Distemper, which is so excessively horrid and deformed. *Miserere anime tue placens Deo*, saith the Wiseman, *Ecclus. 30. v. 24.* Have Compassion of your own Soul, by endeavouring to please God to whom you are so dear, in whose sight you are so precious. What do we not do for the preservation of a Temporal, and as I may call it, a dying life? Gold and Pearl are reduced into Medicines to preserve and maintain it; the remotest Corners of the World are searched into for Remedies to repair it. We read, Lewis the Eleventh King of France, allowed his Physician Six hundred Crowns a day during the time he could keep him alive. We
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Phil.de Comi-
nes in vitâ
Ludo. XI.

Iſa.c. 17. v. 1.

are all ſtrangely bent upon the Cure of this miſerable periſhing Body; but where is he to be found whoſe cares are ſeriously employed about the thoughts of a Life that is *eternal*, and about the welfare of his Soul which is immortal? *Juſtus*, ſaith that Holy Prophet, *perit, & non eſt qui recogitet corde.* The juſt man periſheth, and who taketh notice of it? If a Friend dye, the hardeſt hearts melt into Tears; and if our Souls dye to Divine Grace by Sin, who keeps the Funeral? who either changeth his Countenance or his Garments? *Miferere animæ tuæ placens Deo.* Ah my dear Chriſtian Brother, be ſo juſt to your ſelf, as to take more care hereafter of that which ought to be ſo dear unto you. The Danger, though it be great, yet I hope it is not incurable. Our Saviour, methinks, puts that charitable queſtion to us to day, which he did to a poor Leper upon another occasion; *vis ſanus fieri?* My Friend, have you mind to be cured? Who is ſo careleſs of his own good, and ſo much an enemy to himſelf, as not to return the ſame Answer that the Leper did; *Volo*: O Lord I am willing, it is my only deſire and wiſh; *Jeſu Præceptor, miſerere mei*; *Jeſu Maſter, have mercy on me*, and vouchſafe

Joan.c. 5. v. 6.

safe to cure me. The manner of which Cure shall be the Subject of my Second Part, and the Subject of your Majesties Royal Patience and Attention.

The Second Part.

ALthough *Leprosy* be a Distemper, which as long as it only remains in the superficies or exterior parts, is judged curable; yet when it hath once sunk in, and eaten into the Body, it is look'd upon as altogether past Remedy, all human succour is useless, and nothing left to the poor afflicted Patient, but sadness and despair. Much after the same manner, the Spiritual *Leprosy* of *Sin*, as long as by single and seldom perpetrated acts, and those occasioned meerly by human frailty, want of timely advertency and the vehemence of Temptation, resides as it were in the Surface of the Soul, it gives us hopes of an easie and perfect Cure. But when once by strong and inveterate habits it hath eaten in like a *Cancer*, and spreading it
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self through all the Powers, has kept it now
 for many years in a miserable and languish-
 ing Condition: then the unhappy Patient set-
 ting before his Eyes the horrid and frightful
 Landskip of his former sinful Life, passeth
 from the height of Presumption, to the other
 extream of Despair, crying out with wicked
 Cain, Gen. 1. *My Iniquity is greater then I can hope
 for pardon*; he begins to close with the Opini-
 on of *Averroes* the Philosopher, that sworn E-
 nemy of Christianity, *Lex Christianorum, Lex
 Impossibilium*; That the Law of Christians is
 a Law of things which are impossible. "Ay
 " Sir, saith one, to what end do you propose
 " to me a Remedy, whose wounds are mor-
 " tal, whose *sins* are numberless, and to whom
 " all sort of Debauchery is become a second
 " Nature. What hopes is there that I should
 " ever come to be constant in God's Service,
 " who for a moment cannot abstain from those
 " Crimes that provoke his Justice. It is in vain
 " to go about to make me patient, who at
 " every shadow of an Injury am apt to break
 " into the greatest excess of Passion. 'Tis in
 " vain to perswade me to a constant method
 " of living well, who for so long a time have
 " been a Slave to my brutish Inclinations and
 " unclean

"unclean Desires. Rather give me leave,
 "like the wearied *Elias*, to despair of being
 "able to go any further; permit me then to
 "spend my days in a quiet and uninterrupted
 "pursuit under the shades of my Pleasures
 "and Pastimes. We poor Sinners being
 "loaded and fastned with the Chains of a
 "hundred bad Habits and vicious Customs,
 "can never hope to enter into the Liberty of
 "the Sons of God. So it is *impius cum in pro-*
fundum venerit, contemnit omnia: The impious man, *Prov. II.*
 when he is come into the bottom of wickedness, con-
 temneth all things; as those did in *Ezekiel 33*.
 Our Iniquities are above us, we pine away in the
 midst of them; how then shall we live?

This is the lamentable and dire effect of the
 leprosy of Sin, to wit, a desperate Resolution
 of entering into an Abyss of the most detesta-
 ble Enormities, thereby to stifle the remorse
 and trouble of Conscience, concluding with
 that wicked purpose of the People of Israel not
 long after their going into Captivity into *Ba-*
bylon: We are now grown desperate, and therefore
 we will hereafter follow our own Inventions, and e-
 very one of us fulfil the wickedness of his heart.

Luc. 24.

Luc. 17.

But hold a little, rash and pusillanimous Sinners, whose hearts are thus mis-led with diffidence and despair, as if you were left without Remedy. *Quid turbati estis, & cogitationes ascendunt in corda vestra?* Why are you troubled, and suffer such thoughts as these to enter into your mind? If we were only to look upon our own corrupt Nature, inveterate Habits, and vicious Inclinations, I might perhaps be the first to tempt you to Despair. We are all lost if we rely only upon human Remedies. Rather consider the Example of the ten Lepers belonging to this day; to whom had they recourse? in whom did they place their confidence? was it not in the Mercy and Goodness of Christ? *Jesu Præceptor, miserere nostri: Jesus Master, have mercy on us.* You readily acknowledge that you lay under a Distemper so much the more desperate, by how much the evil is more spiritual: I will not flatter you; I believe what you say; but give me leave to answer you in those comfortable words of S. Augustine, *Serm. 15. de Tempore. O homo quicumque illam peccatorum multitudinem attendis, cur & omnipotentiam & bonitatem Cælestis Medici non attendis?* O man whosoever you are, who only enter into the consideration of the multitude of

of your sins, why do you not consider likewise the Omnipotency and Bounty of the Heavenly Physician? Take then first an exact view of his Nature, then of his Power and his Promises, and lastly of his tenderness in giving us a Remedy, and see what reason you have to despair.

As for its Nature, it is Goodness it self, and his continual work is either to prevent our Miseries by his Favours, or to take them away by his Mercy. Never was Self-love so passionate in the pursuit of its own Interest, as he is in seeking of our Eternal Good; he is ever conquering us with his love, alluring us with his benefits, and accounts himself well dealt with, if we do but thankfully receive them. To punish, is a work estranged from his Nature, nor doth he ever unsheath the Sword of his Justice until our crying Sins have forced him to do it. In all his Works he is admirable; but those of his Mercy and Goodness far exceed the rest; *Misericordia ejus super omnia Opera ejus*. He who to punish never sweat one drop, to pardon us shed many a Tear, sweat Blood in abundance, led a Life in continual labour, and dyed at length upon a Cross in excessive pain and anguish. What more

more can I say; He is a Father, a Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort: *Pater Misericordiarum, & Deus totius Consolationis.*

2 ad Cor. c. i.

He is not stinted so, as to have but one Blessing to bestow, as Isaac was; but hath incomparably more to dispence, then we have wants to supply. In a word, He is a Father whose unlimited Goodness ought not to be measured by our mean and narrow hearted Condition. *Nunquid oculi tibi carnei sunt*

Job. c. i. o.

(saith Holy Job) *aut sicut videt homo, & tu videbis?* Lord, are thy eyes like the eyes of flesh, or is your manner of seeing like that of Man? Man loses his Patience even at the first Injury; his Eye no sooner perceives the Fault, but his Heart is bent upon Revenge; one Affront is sufficient to inflame our Passion. One small offence is able to blot out the memory of many former good turns, whilst a bad one shall be engraved as it were in Steel, and remain upon perpetual Record. If we be wronged by any one, and that perchance by mistake or ignorance, we have not the patience to see him in our presence; we change colour upon hearing his very name; but to entertain him again with those Sentiments of Friendship and Charity which we had before,

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is a Lesson that our corrupt Nature does not understand. *Sed nunquid oculi tui carnei sunt, aut sicut videt homo & tu videbis?* Is the Heart of God so narrow? is his Goodness so bounded? or is his Mercy and Patience of so short an extent? Not so, saith the Prophet David, *Patens & misericors, suavis & longanimis & multa misericordia.* He hath a high and noble Nature, a large compassionate bleeding Heart, a long-enduring Patience, he is ever making the first advance to meet us, to apply Sovereign Remedies to our festred Wounds and Sores, and not only to cleanse us from the odour and filth of a wicked Life, but by the virtue of his holy Grace to render us again worthy of his Presence and Favour.

Yet this is not all; we have the assurance of his Word and Protestation in every Page of Holy Writ, That whosoever shall depart from his wicked ways, and turn unto him, he will receive him: *At what day soever an impious man shall turn unto me from his impiety, his wickedness shall not hurt him,* saith our Lord by his Prophet Ezekiel: and again by Isaiah, *Leave off to do perversly, and then do you come and find fault with me if you can. For if your* sins.

Heb.c.1.& 23.

22ek.c.33.

fins were as red as Scarlet, they shall be made as
 white as Snow. All this Almighty God prom-
 iseth; and he cannot but be as good as his
 word; for all his Attributes stand as so ma-
 ny Sureties to see it performed; his *Wisdom*
 will not let him err; his *Goodness* cannot de-
 ceive us, and his *Omnipotency* cannot fail in
 the performance. *Fidelis est Deus in iis quæ*
repromisit; he is faithful and sure in whatsoever
 he promiseth. *Seipsum negare non potest*; He
 can as soon cease to be, as to deny himself.
 And yet for a further Evidence of his Fide-
 lity, he is not content with a bare Promise,
 but he adds his Oath; *Viva ego, dicit Dominus,*
nolo mortem peccatoris sed magis, ut convertatur &
vivat. He takes a Solemn Oath upon his
 own Life and Being, that as he is a living
 God, he doth not desire the Death and De-
 struction of a Sinner, but that he may be
 converted and live. Go then and deny that
 your Cure is past remedy, and that the
 Chains of his Love and Charity are not able
 to draw you to him. To me, you will re-
 ply, is all this promised, who am conscious
 of no Good, but of Crimes without number;
 who have made a sport of so many Inspira-
 tions and Calls from Heaven, who being
 grown

grown old in wickedness, am come now to the last act of my Life? To you, I answer, all this is promised, and that with a thousand Blessings, with a Reward proportionable, nay even though you came at the last Hour, because his words are words of Truth and Life: *Impietas impii non nocebit ei in quacunque die conversus fuerit.* Ezech. c. 33. v. 12.

But that there may not remain so much as a shadow of the least doubt or diffidence, behold the strange way this Heavenly Physician takes to cure our Infirmary. *Ad sanandum grandem egrotum*, saith S. Augustine, *descendit Omnipotens Medicus, humiliavit se ad mortalem carnem tanquam ad lectum egrotantis*: Almighty God, the Great and Omnipotent Physician of our Souls, is so passionately charitable, that he undertakes the Cure himself; he visiteth in Person the Patient, affording him his Corporal Presence in our assumed Nature; he doth not only prescribe the Medicine, but will stand likewise to the Cost of the Cure, and that after a strange manner, by taking upon him our Infirmities, our Miseries and Grief; *Vere* Esa. c. 53. v. 4. *linguores nostros tulit & dolores nostros ipse portavit.* We read of Constantine the Great, to the

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end he might be cured from a Leprosy, with which for a long time he had been infected, by the Advice of his Physicians, commanded a Bath of the Innocent Blood of Children to be made, for which he was severely checked; and he himself acknowledged the Remedy to be wicked and detestable. What Love then must that be of *Christ* our *Saviour*, who to expel from us all vicious and malignant Humours, to free us from this Spiritual Leprosy, made for us a holy Bath of his Sacred Blood. *Effusus est Sanguis Medici, et factum est Medicamentum Infirmis*; The Blood of the Physician was poured forth, and became a Sovereign Remedy to the Patient; and all this for no other end then that our Cure might be more easie, speedy, and noble.

Aug. in Gra.
c. 15.

1 John c. 2.

Wherefore, saith *S. John*, *Filioli si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Iesum Christum*. My Children, if any one hath been so weak as to have contracted never so great Offences, let him not despair: besides a Father which he hath in Heaven, and a Father of all Mercies, he hath moreover an Intercessor, a Mediator, an Advocate, who will present and follow his Petition; and this Advocate

vocate is a *Jesus*, a *Saviour*, who having spent his life for you, will not be sparing of his words in your behalf, and for what he pleads he will effect it; for the love and respect his Father bears him is such he can deny him nothing. *Exauditus est pro sua Re-* Heb. c. 5. v. 7.
verentia: For he who gave us his only beloved Son, with him gave us, and will grant us all things. Leave then, O Sinner, despair to the damned; he who happily intends to change his Life, his past Offences, hath no greater Opposition to the Mercy of *Christ*, then a Cobweb to a blast of wind. *Quid est peccatum*, (cryeth out S. *Chrysostome*) *ad* Hom. in Psal.
Dei misericordiam? *Aranea quæ vento flante nus-* 5.
quam comparet. I wish every one would return home with this comfortable Thought, yet still with this necessary Caution, that although the Riches of God's Goodness and Mercy (for so S. *Paul* styles them *divitias boni-* Ephes. c. 3.
tatis investigabiles divitias) can never be exhausted; yet if we intend to find a proportionable effect, we must apply this Price, apply these Merits to our Souls by a faithful and diligent Co-operation. We must not fool our selves with that irrational persuasion, That *Christ* hath done all, and chal-

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length

length no further a Concurrence. His Merits, it is true, are sufficient to procure a full pardon of our Sins, if we repent; he gives us *Grace* abundantly to gain Heaven if we co-operate with it; he offers a Price for our Ransome, if we will take the pains to lay it down for our Delivery. *Omnem languentem et infirmum sanat Cælestis Medicus*, (Aug.) *invitum non sanat*. This Heavenly Physician did not live in such Labour, and dye in such Torments, to thrust any one into Heaven against his will? Our Saviour was resolved to cure the Lepers to day in the Gospel, but with this Condition, *Ite, ostendite vos Sacerdotibus*: Go and shew your selves unto the Priests: God's Providence will have man directed, commanded by man, judged by man, and absolved by man. But some are like *Naaman* the Leper, they would have the Prophet say the word, apply his Hand and Cure; but to send him to the River *Jordan*, what force more in this River then another? *Nunquid non meliores sunt fluvii Damasci omnibus aquis Israel ut laver in eis & munder*: Are not the Rivers of Damascus better then all the Waters of Israel, that I may be washed and cleansed in them? But hear the Answer of his Servants; *Si rem grandem dixisset tibi*

tibi Propheta, certe facere debueras: If he had commanded you any great thing, you ought to have done it; but seeing it is so small, why do you not perform it? My dear Christian Brother, if I had perswaded you any hard matter, some long Fast or Penance, you ought to have done it; but my only Exhortation is, *Ostendite vos Sacerdotibus*, Go cast your self at the feet of a Priest, at the Feet of a crucified Jesus, with Tears of a true Repentance, with a Resolution of living a more Pious and Christian Life, and I question not but that every one, as they return home from this Sacred Place, by the Virtue and Merits of Christ, will find themselves with the ten Lepers, cleansed and cured, *Et factum est dum irent mundati sunt*. Which God of his infinite Goodness grant us: *In Nomine Patris, &c.*

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